

## **California Adopts Nation's First Statewide "Green" Building Code**

*New Standards Will Cut Energy Use; Save Water; Reduce Carbon Footprint*

Today, the California Building Standards Commission announced the unanimous adoption of the nation's first statewide "green" building code. The code is a direct result of the [Governor's direction to the Commission](#) and will lead to improved energy efficiency and reduced water consumption in all new construction throughout the state, while also reducing the carbon footprint of every new structure in California.

"Once again California is leading the nation and the world in emissions reductions and finding new ways to expand our climate change efforts," said Commission Chair Rosario Marin. "The commission should be commended for bringing everyone to the table including representatives of the construction and building trades industry, environmental groups and labor organizations, and achieving something no other state has been able to."

The new California Green Building Standards Code goes well beyond the current [building standards](#). These new statewide standards will result in significant improvements in water usage for both commercial and residential plumbing fixtures and target a 50 percent landscape water conservation reduction. They also push builders to reduce energy use of their structures by 15 percent more than today's current standards. They also push builders to reduce energy use of their structures by 15 percent more than today's current standards. The new standards declare the minimum California will accept in environmentally friendly design - local jurisdictions and builders who wish to do more are applauded.

In addition to the new codes adopted today, Governor Schwarzenegger's Green Building Initiative (Executive Order S-20-04) (<http://gov.ca.gov/executive-order/3360/>) directs state agencies to reduce energy use at state-owned buildings 20 percent by 2015, while also reducing the impact state buildings have on climate change. His executive order directs that new state construction and major renovation projects should meet a minimum of the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Silver certification in order to save energy, conserve water, divert waste from landfills and cut greenhouse gas emissions. To date, 13 state buildings have achieved LEED certification.

According to the U.S. Green Building Council, buildings nationwide account for 70 percent of electricity consumption, 39 percent of energy usage, 12 percent of potable water consumption, 40 percent of raw materials usage, 30 percent of waste output (136 million tons annually), and produce 39 percent of associated greenhouse gases (CO<sub>2</sub>).

California's new building standards will result in increased water and energy savings through a combination of more efficient appliances, use of efficient landscapes and more efficient building design and operation. The code also encourages the use of recycled materials in carpets and building materials, and identifies various site improvements including parking for hybrid vehicles and better storm water plans.

Additionally, the new code contains standards for single-family homes, health facilities and commercial buildings. The code is composed of optional standards that will become mandatory in the 2010 edition of the code. This adjustment period will allow for industry and local enforcement agencies to prepare for, and comply with, the new green building standards.

Moving forward after 2010, the California Green Building Standards Code will be updated on an annual basis to ensure that the latest technology and methods of construction have been incorporated to always maintain a high level of standards.

For more than 20 years, the California Building Standards Commission has established California as an international leader in areas such as energy conservation, water conservation and seismic strengthening—resulting in some of the most efficient and sustainable buildings in the world.

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